

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting April 21, 2014 Bailey Auditorium - MHS

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Stafford, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

ABSENT:

A. OPENING

A.1.& 2. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairperson Pattacini. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

A.3. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of March 24, 2014. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

7/0/1 – Voted in favor. Cruz abstained, Stafford not present.

A.4. Adoption of Minutes of Public Forum

ADOPTED – Minutes Public Forum of April 2, 2014. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

7/0/1 – Voted in favor. Cruz abstained, Stafford not present.

A.5. Adoption of Special Meeting Minutes

ADOPTED – Minutes Special Meeting of the Board of Education of April 10, 2014. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

7/0/1 – Voted in favor. Cruz abstained, Stafford not present.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

Dr. Kisiel presented four items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

B.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

B.2. Transfer of Funds

Details had already been provided to the Board members in their agenda folders.

- Transfer from Bentley Alternative Education General Supplies and Materials to Bentley Alternative Education Professional Development account in the amount of \$400
- Transfer from Manchester High School Social Studies Dues & Fees to Manchester High School Social Studies Textbooks account in the amount of \$95
- Transfer from MHS Admin Contracted Services (\$12,680) to MHS Admin General Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$3,000 and to MHS Admin Instructional Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$9,680
- Transfer from System-wide Library/Media Instructional Supplies and Materials to System-wide Library/Media Professional Development account in the amount of \$170
- Transfer from Keeney Printing and Advertising (\$600), from Keeney Admin Professional Development (\$200), and from Keeney Admin Dues & Fees (\$216) to Keeney Admin General Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$600 and to Keeney Contracted Kelly Subs account in the amount of \$416.
- Transfer from MHS Science Instructional Supplies and Materials to MHS Science and Athletic Trips account in the amount of \$600
- Transfer from MHS Curriculum and Instruction Contracted Services to MHS Student Activities Field Trip account in the amount of \$5,000
- Transfer from Washington Social Studies Field Trips (\$456), from Admin Professional Development (\$1,000), and from Admin Printing/Advertising (\$19) to Washington Language Arts Instructional Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$1475

- Transfer from System-wide Special Education Contracted Services (\$10,000), from Consultants (\$8,000), and from Other Purchased Services (\$12,000) to System-wide Special Education Computer Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$10,00 and to Instructional Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$20,000
- Transfer from Martin School Admin Professional Development to Martin School Admin Computer Supplies and Materials account in the amount of \$200

B.3. Permission to apply for Manchester Adult Education Grant for the FY 2014-2015 school year in the amount of \$977,947

B.4. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$22,000 for FY 13-14 for the Heisman Scholars grant at Washington Elementary School

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in Section B of tonight's agenda.

8/0 - Voted in favor. Stafford not present.

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, is President of the Washington PTA and a resident of the West Side neighborhood. He presented a petition with 157 signatures from people showing their love to Washington, to save the school, the neighborhood, and Manchester. He pointed out that signatures were gathered from those that live outside of the neighborhood as well. Mr. Aiken does not understand how this plan came about or could be approved. He would not throw any neighborhood school under the bus to make up for a mistake made by this board for over two decades. The difference in cost to the taxpayers for the plan to save all the schools with a 5th/6th academy against the preferred plan of the Board would cost about \$10 a month more, or about \$120 a year. Mr. Aiken feels that even seniors on a fixed income can afford that. Mr. Aiken also feels there are other options than renovating all the buildings like new as well, which have not been explored. He will not stop fighting for his neighborhood, feeling this plan is the biggest mistake ever. Mr. Aiken states the Board is throwing two neighborhoods "under the bus". He would like to see the research that Mr. Pattacini referenced in an email to him. He feels the Board keeps saying this is the "best for the neighborhood", but they don't know the neighborhood. The Washington neighborhood is a mixed race, mixed income area which makes for a sustainable neighborhood. With the student makeup being ¼ white, ¼ black, ¼ Hispanic, and ¼ Asian/mixed-race, Mr. Aiken feels Washington is the most racially balance school in town.

Jeff Orszak, 61 Lorraine Road, feels that the Board has a marked need for better public relations and communication from the Board to the community. His wife has spoken with several people in the affected areas and they have no clear sense of the plan for the neighborhood. He stated the Board cannot expect people to back this plan without enough information. Mr. Orszak stated the board needs to do a better job with communication.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, noted that tomorrow is the 44th anniversary of Earth Day, which is an important day regarding sustaining life on Earth and understanding what Earth science is about. He recommended a series on Fox, *Cosmos*. Mr. Stringfellow, who works for the postal service, recommended an article on stranger danger in the East Hartford *Reminder* from April 17th. In *Scientific America*, he recommended a physics article because science is relevant to student's lives. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *If It's Broken Don't Fix It*, regarding the Common Core. He notes some states are opting out of the Common Core. May 4th is the Walk for Hunger, which is in Hartford for the 7th year. Last, Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *How to Handle Difficult Parents*.

Jennifer West, 164 Pearl Street, is a Washington parent that was also affected by the closing of Nathan Hale previously. She wants more details about the plan. She finds it funny that Nathan Hale was closed two years ago and now they are talking about what to do with the building. She would like to know the costs associated with closing Washington and she has a huge problem with it. Ms. West notes that as people educate themselves their income grows, as her income has grown with changing from working retail to working in business. With a mega school, she is unsure the type of education the children will get, surrounded by so many more kids. One behavioral child affects all the children in the class, she can't image adding students to that. She understands costs, but she wants more communication regarding how all the schools will be affected and where the Washington kids will go and how that will affect that school. Also, once the schools are closed, Ms. West wants to know what we will do with the buildings. She needs details about the plans so she can decide whether to purchase a house or move. For her a mega school is not a good option for her children and she needs to know whether to invest in Manchester or not.

D. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

D.1. Student Representative Report

Joseph Coyne, Student Representative, highlighted the fall and winter activities:

- Homecoming was held at Rentschler October 19th with over 550 tickets sold.
- Freshman elections were held.
- October 24th Involvement Fair highlighted the various clubs to the students.
- October 26th was the Community Halloween Party.

- November 21st was the Turkey Bowl, where the Junior and Senior girls compete in football and the boys act as cheerleaders. This is a fundraiser for MACC food pantry and over 425 canned goods and over \$500 was raised. The seniors won!
- The Interact Club, led by Mrs. Miner and Mrs. Donnelly, offers an opportunity for students to complete community service and a cleanup of the back of the school all the way to the tennis courts was held, filling 11 bags of garbage.
- Grow So You Know contest was in November where students and staff were challenged to grow or create different styles of facial hair. Winners received a free yearbook or 2 tickets to Snow Ball.
- The Leadership Conference was held November 22-23 at Waterbury Arts Magnet High School.
- In December the National Honor Society members raised money with a coffee cart for teachers.
- Snow Ball Dance was held January 25th at Rentschler Field.
- MHS Ski Club visited Okemo Mountain February 22 and its 40 members have taken 6 trips to Ski Sundown over the winter.
- The Student Ambassador Program is new at MHS and has over 60 members.
- The Annual Murder Mystery Dinner was held March 7th as a fundraiser for the Class of 2015.
- The MARC dance was held March 14th.
- Cap & Gown measurements were taken March 21st. For those that missed that date, April 30th is the next opportunity.
- Cupcake Wars was held in March – a special thank you to judges Mayor Diana, Board Chair Chris Pattacini, and Chef Jason Shepard from Lincoln Culinary Institute.
- FBLA State Competition – March 31st, had several students finish in the top 5 of their events and those that finished in the top 3 qualified to compete in the National Event in Nashville in late June.
- The Fellowship of Christian Youth held an Easter service on April 9th.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Joseph for his report and noted he had fun judging the Cupcake Wars. He appreciates all the volunteer efforts and fundraisers held for our community and all the hard work that goes in to them.

D.2. State Department of Education Compliance Report

Dr. Kisiel reported that the Teacher's Union filed a complaint with the State last fall, claiming that Special Education Supervisors had directed classification of students in a specific way. This complaint spurred a full compliance report of all our special education procedures from the State.

Ms. Matfess reported that as of October 1st there were 933 students identified as special education in the district. Of that number, 15 were identified with Intellectual

Disability – which was the classification the State was looking at. Of those 15 students, 5 were black. The State said that was too many black students.

Files were reviewed and three students were ordered back to PPT. Of those 3, one student had since moved and two PPTs were completed.

Ms. Matfess' Power Point is available for review on the website. The State has been satisfied and the case has been closed.

Ms. Cruz wanted to clarify, asking if only 15 students were found not in compliance? Ms. Matfess stated that was incorrect, out of 933 students, only three were found not in compliance. Ms. Cruz was surprised at the low number, noting that we are pretty much in compliance.

Mr. Thames noted five black students were identified as having an Intellectual Disability. He wondered what that meant. Ms. Matfess stated it indicates a lower IQ range for their ability levels. She noted some students move into our district already with this identification and there are various disability categories. Mr. Thames asked what actions were taken. Ms. Matfess stated we looked at our services, supports, and assessment tools. Testing students in their native language is important. Mr. Thames wondered if these students have a scheduled interval to provide help for these young people, being concerned that they don't fall through the cracks or labeled without appropriate intervention to allow them to be successful. Ms. Matfess stated there is a protocol and also noted she is working with Dr. Radikas to strengthen regular education supports for struggling students prior to having a referral to Special Education.

Mr. Pattacini thanked the administration for its update. He noted that there was a good dialogue with the State and corrective action was taken with improved outcomes ensuring students are provided with the services they need and are appropriately categorized.

E. NEW BUSINESS

E.1. High School Graduation Date

Dr. Kiesel stated that after April 1st districts are allowed to establish a firm graduation date. He recommends June 19, 2014.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to establish the High School graduation date as June 19, 2014. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

Mr. Pattacini stated the graduation would be held at the Convention Center in Hartford as in previous years.

E.2. Adjustment to School Lunch Pricing

Dr. Kisiel reviewed that the federal government needs to make sure districts are not using federal funds to fully fund their lunch programs, only to support them.

Nick Aldi, Director of Food Services, explained that paid lunch prices need to be at a weighted average. He provided current pricing for our district reference group. Our weighted average is \$1.99. To be compliant, we need to raise prices by 10c across the board. Last year only middle and elementary schools saw a 10c increase.

Secretary Scappaticci moved for the Board to approve an increase in all lunch prices by ten cents (10c) for the 2014/2015 school year. Leon seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F.1. Elementary School Facilities

Dr. Kisiel stated one item that was important to review was the tax impact as many people asked what this would cost them. Dr. Kisiel provided an overview of the annual and total (20 year bond) tax impact of options 4-7. This complete overview is available on the website. Figures were given for three typical home assessed values, \$137,800; \$175,000; and \$210,000.

Mr. Pattacini clarified that \$137,800 is the median assessed property value in town. He also handed out to the Board the proposed motion, which can be tweaked tonight.

Mr. Leon noted the Board had not met since the public forum and he was curious about other Board member's opinions. He is uncomfortable with a motion at this point. Mr. Pattacini noted that the discussion would happen at this point tonight.

Ms. Cruz asked about the timeframe to present this to the Board of Directors. Mr. Pattacini reviewed a decision would be made tonight and a meeting would be scheduled to present that to the Board of Directors, at which time the administration would present the plan. Ms. Cruz then asked Dr. Kisiel if the demographer, Mr. Zuba, considered racial balance in his redistricting plan. Dr. Kisiel stated that all the plans considered racially balancing the schools. Ms. Cruz inquired if we were in balance today. Dr. Kisiel stated that all the schools were in balance currently and

closing Nathan Hale helped accomplished this. However Verplanck is close to pending imbalance.

Mr. Crockett asked some questions he has heard from the public, including about projected classroom sizes. Dr. Kisiel reviewed the plan calls for classrooms of between 17 to 22 students. Mr. Crockett pointed out that is similar to what is currently happening in the district. Mr. Crockett asked if teachers will be laid off with the favored plan. Dr. Kisiel said no teacher lay-offs are anticipated, though administrative reorganization is possible. Mr. Crockett pointed out that some people have said the special education needs will not be met as well with the favored plan. Dr. Kisiel stated that the improvements provided with the facilities, with designated areas for occupational and physical therapy and other special education needs, will only improve the services. He also pointed out that the district's obligation to hold PPTs and comply with IEPs is required no matter the size of the school.

Mr. Crockett reviewed what has occurred over the last few years to end up with this plan. He noted in response to the Critical Assessment Report the SMARTR Committee was created. SMARTR asked the Board of Education for a priority list of needs and out of that a recommendation for the 5th grade academy came about, which would create needed space. The SMARTR Committee asked which elementary schools were the Board's priority and they were told Washington and Robertson, so they proposed two new schools there. The SMARTR Committee reviewed many studies. You can always find someone to say one way is better than another, however the committee heard nothing to indicate 535 students in a school, with classrooms of 17-22 students, would be detrimental to students. He pointed out that the Committee wanted a new school at Washington but due to the battle with both the Historical Society and Cheney Commission, that plan would not be allowed. While some other plans might have worked on that site, the desire to keep the green space outweighed the other options. The Robertson site came with some site restrictions due to underground issues as well. The alternatives of Verplanck and Waddell were chosen. While Mr. Crockett feels it is terrible to close schools, this option provides for a new Verplanck and renovated Waddell for about \$14-22 more a year in taxes. He feels the children deserve new schools and with new schools more people will want to move to this town and property values will go up.

Mr. Crockett was disappointed that the Board did not anticipate the questions that would be asked and provide answers at the previous meeting. He notes that if this plan moves forward he is in favor of a new school at the Verplanck site, though if the Board of Directors will not approve that then a like-new renovation would be acceptable. He feels this plan is best for the entire town.

Mr. Thames stated that the students deserve a new facility that they can be proud of and excel in academically. He understands the concerns of the parents and he

has weighed them. He notes that change can sometimes be painful but hopes that years from now we will look back and deem the plan successful.

Mr. Stafford agreed with Mr. Crockett, that he would like to see a new building at Verplanck. He notes this has been a difficult decision but we are maxed out of space. Building a new 5th grade academy creates space in the schools. He notes that while the critical assessment list is about \$33 million, the renovating of the schools cuts into that list. Mr. Stafford noted that he has lived in Manchester his whole life. Back then, when he attended Waddell, there were about 450 students and he did not feel lost, nor did he have a huge class. Many elementary schools have been closed in town through the years, including Bentley, Lincoln, South, and Green. Mr. Stafford pointed out that over the past ten years a lot of money has been invested in Waddell and that was considered. Also considered was that about 80% of the students at Robertson are bused, compared to about 80% of the Waddell students being walkers. While Robertson is a newer building, the walls are moveable in a large section of the building, which creates some issues.

Ms. Pazda thanked the SMARTR Committee for the great job they did. She notes closing a school is never easy and recalled when Highland Park was closed in the past. She has thought about Washington and previously she was against closing Nathan Hale. She feels the green space at Washington is vital and notes that the Mahoney Rec Center will remain there. Ms. Pazda pointed out that the town is currently looking at other uses for Nathan Hale. Ms. Pazda prefers a new building at Verplanck as it would be an opportunity for students from Washington and Verplanck to come together in a new facility in a positive way. She notes this plan also provides for racial balance and reduces the percentage of Free or Reduced Price lunch students in one school. She feels there has been some confusion about a mega school. She notes that the class sizes and good teachers are the most important part and those will not change. The special resources that are needed will follow the child. Things like lunch waves and programs in auditoriums do not need to be issues. Ms. Pazda feels moving 5th grade with 6th will provide for smoother transitions and help with teaming. She likes the idea of either a new or like-new Verplanck.

Mr. Pattacini stated it looks like there is consensus so far regarding a new Verplanck, with an alternate plan of a like-new Verplanck. Ms. Pazda agreed.

Mr. Leon notes it was a difficult decision to come to the decision to close Washington and Robertson. He feels Manchester is a reactive town, not proactive. He feels we wait for things to break and then figure out how to fix them. Instead of looking at other towns we should let them follow us. Mr. Leon notes that ongoing operational costs of keeping all the schools open have not been addressed. He pointed out that this year we need to cut \$650,000 from the budget. We need to

realize that operational costs tend to rise with newer schools. However, we cannot maintain the number of buildings we have, which is sad, but it is a fact. Even with a great new administration, Mr. Leon fears people will leave the district for a district that invests in their schools. We have an opportunity to do stuff for the future generation with really good leadership. He is not pleased that we cannot build new at Washington, however he feels it is not ideal to invest money into a 1912 building. He notes the Cheney Commission is not willing to help with funding. Mr. Leon states we cannot satisfy everyone and he understands being passionate about your own neighborhood school. In fact, that is how he wound up on the Board, concerning Highland Park. Mr. Leon states we have to do something and show our children how to embrace change, not fear it, and find the positives. Mr. Leon feels this is an opportunity to develop coping skills. He supports the option with a new Verplanck, not a like-new facility.

Mr. Leon asked Dr. Kisiel if the Board of Directors can cut up the recommendation into multiple referendums. Dr. Kisiel stated they could. Mr. Leon feels that would be a terrible mistake and he strongly suggests encouraging the Board of Directors to keep Phase 1 in one referendum. Mr. Pattacini pointed out that at the end of the proposed motion that suggestion is stated.

Ms. Hagenow stated that nobody wants to see a school close, noting that people often move to a neighborhood to be close to a particular school. In reality the schools need major work and the budget cannot support that. That is why SMARTR was created, to explore viable options. Ms. Hagenow hears that people want all the schools renovated like new, but she is not comfortable with the tax impact of that over the next 20 years.

Mr. Scappaticci wanted to be clear that larger schools do not mean larger classes. He also wanted to correct something someone had stated at a meeting previously about CREC schools. That person stated CREC schools have 200-300 pupils. That is not true, there is not one CREC school below 400 students, and many are at about 500. Mr. Scappaticci also heard the disappointment from members of the public, some stating they would leave Manchester if this plan happens. He loves Manchester very much and would never hold his town hostage like that. He pointed out that people will find this same situation in many towns now, including South Windsor, East Hartford, and Waterford. South Windsor just voted to consolidate their elementary schools to schools for 400-500 students. Mr. Scappaticci stated that one email he received said the Board didn't want to have the difficult conversation, but he disagrees. He feels we have had it publicly and openly. During his campaign he also walked the Nathan Hale district with several other candidates to give people an opportunity to meet and ask questions. It comes down to what is best for our student's education. Mr. Scappaticci states that studies have shown that it is not the size of the school that is important, but class size and school

climate. Studies also show mixed socio-economic schools are more successful. He feels leaving a school with 85% Free/Reduced lunch in the middle of our town is simply wrong. He is comfortable with either a new or like-new Verplanck.

Ms. Cruz stated she has been on medical leave since March 19th, but has kept abreast of the meetings. Previously, she was in favor of not closing schools and several years ago she pushed for the facilities study. That study was televised three years ago and in response SMARTR was created. For three years there have been discussions and questions were allowed. She has been upset there has not been more participation from parents to provide guidance and feedback. She notes that there are many ways to know when and where meetings are held, and yet not many parents come. She was impressed with Mr. Crockett's speech. She struggled with closing Nathan Hale. She notes Washington is falling apart and that climate is not okay. Her children attended there some years ago and there have been no major renovations since that time. Her children also attended Bennet when there were 3 grades there, of some 500+ students. All three of her children are great achievers. Ms. Cruz pointed out that climate impacts a child's ability to learn. She recently sat with a Washington PTA mom and was reminded of the wonderful programs Washington provides. There is pride at Washington. She is saddened that over the years the Board has continued to allow the deterioration and not resolve the issues. Ms. Cruz feels our children deserve better. She agrees with a lot of what Mr. Aiken says and she appreciates his knowledge, but our kids deserve a new school. Ms. Cruz also pointed out that with the Mill apartments and football and baseball teams using the green space on a daily basis, choosing a plan that takes away that green space would have a negative impact on the neighborhood. She supports a new school. Ms. Cruz feels we can do a great job with Verplanck. When her twins were in high school one opted to attend a magnet school part-time because it was a brand new school. She ultimately pulled her out of the magnet to return to MHS full time because we teach our children well. However, our facilities are screaming for help and we need to address that. She supports the option on the table and is on the fence about presenting the Board of Directors with two options regarding Verplanck.

Mr. Stafford would like the safety and security concerns as well as NEASC needs sent to the Board of Directors to consider while crafting a referendum. Dr. Kisiel stated administration would prepare a proposal regarding that for the next meeting.

Mr. Pattacini supports the plan. He notes nobody wants to close a school, it is a natural reaction. Nobody wants their taxes to go up either. Every dollar spent on a building is a dollar not spent in a classroom. If we do not support a cost effective plan it will be harder to keep operating costs down. The community needs to be educated about the plan. A lot of work went on during the two years of SMARTR. Mr. Pattacini notes that of the 8 current school projects currently in the state

pipeline, the average school size is 600 students, with 427 being the smallest. We need to think about the students.

Mr. Pattacini pointed out that Washington is 85% socioeconomically disadvantaged families. The right thing, in his opinion, is to make the painful decision to close the school and move the students to a new school. This will allow for a more cost effective way to provide the services and community with what they need and prevent this from happening in the future. There is a reason Washington is in the shape it is in and that Martin and Bowers and Buckley are not. The sad reality is that the loudest voices get served and this is his way of helping every child access the services and education a new building can provide.

Mr.Scappaticci moved and Mr. Crocket seconded the following resolution to be presented to the Board of Directors:

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has, since November 2013, been considering and deliberating over a number of options to address the many issues confronting our elementary school infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education, informed by the two years of work of the SMARTR Committee, our own assessment of educational needs and requirements going forward, knowledge of the condition of our elementary school facilities, and, the advice of both the interim and the incoming Superintendent, has selected one of seven options deliberated upon; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education seeks to simultaneously address enrollment issues, racial balancing, educational excellence, stable class sizes at 17-22, modern classroom space and amenities, contiguous districts, and, fiscal responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education believes it has determined the path that best addresses all of these responsibilities in an achievable plan which can and must proceed quickly; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education hereby recommends to the Board of Directors that it consider and vote to accept the following proposal:

PHASE I

- 1. Like new grade 5/6 Cheney/Bennet Academy**
- 2. Like new Waddell Elementary School - 530 students**

3. Preferably a brand new Verplanck Elementary School at the Verplanck site for 530 students, or as an alternative a like-new Verplanck Elementary School for 530
4. Discontinue Washington Elementary School as a school
5. Close Robertson Elementary School; use as swing space as necessary

PHASE II

(not necessarily in order)

1. Like new Buckley Elementary School
2. Like new Bowers Elementary School
3. Like new Keeney Elementary School
4. Like new Martin Elementary School.

Be it further resolved that the Board of Education proposes that the Board of Directors considers a November 2014 Referendum to encompass all of Phase I with Phase II to be initiated when Phase I is approaching completion.

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Hagenow noted that if this decision passes, there is still a process for closing a school. Mr. Pattacini stated that procedure is if the Board acts to close a school. In this instance, the question is for the voters to decide and if it passes, then the Board need not take any further action.

The question was called.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

G. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pattacini reviewed the next step will be to send this resolution to the Board of Directors, which administration will present. Typically, the Board of Directors develops referendum questions over the summer if they decide to proceed and an ultimate decision will be made by the voters in the fall.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

H.1. Curriculum & Instruction Committee

Mr. Scappaticci reviewed the last meeting was held on March 25, 2014 with Ms. Hagenow, Ms. Pazda, himself, Dr. Radikas, Dr. Oliver, and Dr. Ratchford in attendance. The Summer Advantage Academy of Manchester was discussed, including NWEA data for those students that completed the program and those that did not complete the program in the Summer of 2013.

The patterns noted were:

- Black and white students who completed SAAM had higher mean RIT scores than those who did not complete SAAM
- Grade 5 students who did not attend have a higher mean RIT score in math and reading
- Grade 6 students who did not attend have a higher mean RIT score in reading

The goal of SAAM was to deter the summer slide and by comparing the Spring 2013 to Fall 2013 NWEA data it looks like the goal was accomplished.

Regarding Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) current district-wide supports for tiered interventions were shared as well as modes of delivery. NWEA data was utilized to determine building level areas of need. The committee is looking at increasing certified Reading Consultants and introducing Math Consultants at the elementary level for the 2014-2015 school year to assist with tiered interventions.

The next meeting is May 27, 2014.

H.2. Buildings & Sites Committee

Mr. Crockett reviewed the last meeting was held on April 3, 2014. In attendance were himself, Mr. Stafford, Dr. Kisiel, Mr. Geary, and Mr. Ziegler. The committee reviewed the design of the interior renovations at Illing. The design of the electrical upgrades for Buckley and Keeney were reviewed and will be completed over summer break. Last, the Facilities Critical Assessment Report was reviewed. Security modifications are estimated at \$4,151,600 and critical need items that must be done are estimated at \$5,140,000.

The next meeting will be held May 1, 2014.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Tracy Maio, 57 Horton Road, thinks the Board seems angry tonight. She notes the plan the Board is backing raises taxes by about \$15 a month. The plan she prefers raises taxes by about \$25 a month. She is okay with the difference to keep the neighborhood schools intact and the community intact. She feels there will be trouble with that with larger schools. She wonders if other cost-cutting ideas have been explored, including renewable energy and solar panels. She feels we should learn from our mistakes about being reactive instead of proactive. She hopes that the schools will be kept up in the future. Ms. Maio does not want to hear what other towns are doing, wondering if they are making bigger schools because the state is paying for it. She wants to hear what is better for the kids. She wants us to be a leader, not a follower. She wants to talk about Pre-K. She is sad that there have been no major renovations at Washington in

over 15 years. And for the record, she does not feel bad that she skipped a Saturday meeting of the Board in favor of family time.

Jennifer West, 164 Pearl Street, also can't feel bad about missing a Saturday meeting. She is here because she cares about Washington and Manchester. Regarding taking the town hostage, she talks a good game about leaving or not buying a house here, but she will probably stay. She grew up here. She suggests that in closing the school to look at the location of who is moving. The kids don't care if they don't have stability in school. Now she and her children will have to get to know a whole new set of teachers. Her children deserve stability. She wants to know when the move will occur. Her son attended Nathan Hale from K-2nd grade and then had to move to Washington for 3rd. Her daughter will be starting K at Washington in the fall and she wonders if that child as well will have to change schools for 3rd grade as her brother did. She is angry, though she does appreciate the hard work of the Board.

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, is a Navy brat who appreciates change. He heard that it was considered that Waddell had 80% walkers. Now all the students at Washington that were walkers will be on a bus. One reason, Mr. Aiken claims, that our budget is being cut by the town is that there are 43 positions vacant due to attrition or retirements that were not taken out of our budget. Mr. Aiken bought a house in the Washington neighborhood; he understands the families in the neighborhood. He feels the Board has now thrown two neighborhoods with low voter turnout under the bus. He will make it his mission to change that. He used to want to sit on the Board, but he can't do that because he can't sell out his neighborhood. Mr. Aiken pointed out that climate was talked about, but there is no climate without a neighborhood and it is not a neighborhood school if you can't walk to it. With no money being spent on Washington in over ten years, he feels the Prejudice of Preference, which he suggests you look up. He claims the Board is systematically removing the ability of residents in the East and West side neighborhoods to lift themselves up. And for the record, he is not angry with the Cheney Commission; all they did was prevent the Board from breaking the law.

Lesley Frey, 30 Florence Street, talked to over 100 people about reopening Nathan Hale and about neighborhood schools in general. She feels 95% of people want a neighborhood school. She feels the Board is confused, wanting like-new. She does not feel like-new is the way to go. She feels we should just fix what is broken. Regarding Nathan Hale parents, she feels they never had a fair chance to voice their concerns about closing their school because the meeting regarding their building was held at Waddell. She points out that Dr. Kisiel said racial balance was achieved when Nathan Hale was closed. That was an upsetting statement. She feels it could have been achieved by closing Martin or Keeney as well and achieved balance. The magnet school never happened, which would also have helped with racial balance. She notes Ms. Cruz's children attended Washington, but now it is not good enough and has not been maintained. Ms. Frey recalled Mr. Pattacini stated the loudest voices get served. She

hopes people attend the meeting regarding repurposing Nathan Hale on Wednesday. Yes the boiler needs to be fixed, but the building is still functioning.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, felt the Student Representative report was impression. He is asking for a second time for a presentation from the Business Department and Career Center and also one from Technology Education. Not all students go to college. He feels the Board should listen to input from the public, even regarding changing the public comment sessions. Mr. Stringfellow pointed out East Hartford High Matthew Ryan, Principal of the Year. He recommended an article on public safety, noting the fine for passing a bus is \$450. He recommended an article on fake pot in *TIME* magazine. Regarding the decision tonight, he feels the Board did what it had to do and you won't please everyone. He hopes information gets out to the public regarding the referendum. He spoke about cutting down on prejudice and feels we can do better in Manchester. He wants all students to learn. Last, Mr. Stringfellow recommended an article regarding parent involvement from the *New York Times* this morning.

Jeff Orszak, 61 Lorraine Road, notes that having a 5th/6th academy shifts transitions, but does not lessen them. Regarding CREC schools, their counts include Pre-K at 435 kids, which is not a fair comparison. Mr. Orszak states that Mr. Crockett claims the 5th/6th grade academy is an educationally sound plan, but when asked about it the Board gave no response. When asked about the parking or playground, the architect responded. If there is an educational benefit he wants to hear it. If this plan fails we are back to square one. We need to be proactive, thinking about Pre-K and helping the disadvantaged students of this town.

Denise Curran, 65 West Middle Turnpike, feels teacher collaboration will be more difficult with larger schools, and it will be harder to come to a consensus. She is disappointed that Ms. Hagenow is worried about her taxes, not about the kids. One way to cut costs is to lower the heat in the buildings. Ms. Curran feels like it is 80 degrees in her child's building and certainly that is one way to cut back.

J. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Mr. Leon seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary